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HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

11 July 2003

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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HOT TOPICS

B-Vitamin Problems May Cause Depression in Some

05 July – Reuters reported new findings suggests that some people with depression might have problems metabolizing the B vitamin folate -- supporting the idea that supplements could help ward off the condition, researchers say. Investigators in Norway found that depression occurred more commonly in people who had high levels of the amino acid [homocysteine](#) in their blood, and in those who carried a form of a gene that encodes a protein involved in processing folate. Homocysteine is a normal byproduct of metabolism, and [folic acid](#) -- the form of folate found in supplements -- is known to aid in breaking down homocysteine. [View Article](#)

Benefit to Having Been Vaccinated Against Smallpox as a Child

05 July – Science Blog reported adults who were vaccinated against [smallpox](#) as children can be successfully revaccinated by using diluted doses of the vaccine and with fewer side effects, according to research published by Saint Louis University this week in the Journal of the American Medical Association. People who had been vaccinated as a child had fewer adverse reactions to the diluted vaccine than people who received the vaccine for the first time. The study included healthy adult volunteers between the ages of 32 and 60 who previously had been vaccinated. The comparison group consisted of individuals who were otherwise healthy and between the ages of 18 and 31, who had never received a smallpox vaccination. [View Article](#)

Gene Mutation Predicts Outcome for Lung Cancer Patients

08 July – Science Blog reported patients with the earliest form of the most common type of lung cancer are more than twice as likely to die of the disease within four years if they have a mutation in a well-known cancer-causing gene, scientists have found. The study in the July 2 issue of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute also shows that lung cancer patients who both smoke and consume alcohol frequently are more likely to have the mutation. [View Article](#)

Genome Survey Finds Depression Genes

02 July – Reuters reported U.S. researchers using the newly published human gene map said they had identified 19 different genetic regions linked with depression. The findings could eventually lead

to better treatments and screening for depression and related conditions, such as addiction, a leading cause of disability in the United States. Dr. George Zubenko, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and colleagues screened 81 families with members suffering from recurrent, early-onset, major depressive disorder, which runs in families. They found 19 regions on chromosomes that seem to be involved in the condition, they reported in the American Journal of Medical Genetics. Further work should be able to pinpoint the actual genes involved. [View Article](#)

Human Genes Predict AIDS Progression Rate

02 July – Science Blog reported a Los Alamos National Laboratory researcher and her colleagues have found that people with less common types of proteins on their white blood cells seem to mount a better immune response against the [HIV](#) virus and tend to fight progression of the disease better than people with common white blood cell proteins. The research, presented in the July issue of Nature Medicine, eventually might help researchers better understand and exploit potential weaknesses in HIV. The researchers studied a large group of homosexual men who were enrolled in the Chicago component of the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study - an ongoing study of the natural and treated history of thousands of men infected with HIV. [View Article](#)

Preventing Foot Fungi

06 July – Health Day News reported with more than 250,000 sweat glands in the foot, maintaining the kind of ventilation necessary to prevent fungal growth can be a challenge. Failure to do so can lead to such problems as foot odor, [fungal nail infections](#), [athlete's foot](#) and other skin infections, warns the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA). Common areas of fungal growth are the soles of the feet and between the toes. Signs of infection can include dry skin, itching, scaling, inflammation and blisters that can break and lead to pain and swelling. If you find your feet plagued with such problems, you're probably not alone in your community -- infections such as athlete's foot are contagious and can be spread not only at warm, humid places such as swimming pools, but even through the sharing of towels. The article lists actions that prevent foot fungal infections. [View Article](#)

Push To Treat Forgotten Diseases

03 July – CBS News reported six health bodies launched a \$250 million push to find cures for three diseases they say have been forgotten by commercial drug companies. The Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative, launched by the aid group Doctors Without Borders and five major health institutes, will fund research projects for drugs to treat three parasitic diseases — [sleeping sickness](#), [leishmaniasis](#) and [Chagas disease](#). The initiative claims that only 10 percent of research funding is spent on diseases that account for 90 percent of illness worldwide because commercial drug companies see no profit in spending money on diseases that affect only poor nations. [View Article](#)

Researchers Identify Clotting Protein That Causes Hepatitis B

05 July – Science Blog reported a protein molecule that contributes to the severity of chronic [viral hepatitis](#) in humans, and which may also be implicated in [SARS](#), has been identified by a team of scientists from Toronto General and St. Michael's Hospitals. The data is published in the 01 July issue of the Journal of Clinical Investigation. The protein, called Fgl2/fibroleukin prothrombinase, is a newly discovered protein that causes blood to clot in the livers of humans with viral hepatitis. In animal trials, this same protein causes blood to clot in the livers of mice that are exposed to the corona virus. [View Article](#)

Stem Cell Hope for Spinal Injuries

02 July – BBC News reported cells from human embryos have been used to make paralyzed rats walk again. The US researchers who carried out the experiments hope it should be possible to begin similar trials on human subjects in just two years. [Embryonic stem cells](#) (ESCs) have huge potential use for scientists because they have the ability to turn into many different forms of tissue. However, their use remains highly controversial. New Scientist magazine reports that the US team harvested cells from human embryos at an early stage of development. They then manipulated them in the laboratory to turn them into specialized cells that form myelin, the insulating layer that surrounds nerve fibers. These cells were transplanted into paralyzed rats with bruised spines. After nine weeks, the rats fully regained the ability to walk. Analysis of the rats' spinal cords showed that the cells had wrapped themselves around nerve cells and formed new myelin sheaths. They also secreted substances that appeared to have stimulated the formation of new nerves. [View Article](#)

UN: Less Developed Countries Worse-Off Than a Decade Ago

08 July – VOA News reported a United Nations report shows that 54 impoverished countries are poorer than they were 10 years ago. The annual Human Development Report released in Geneva, tracks progress by 175 countries on a variety of development goals, including reducing poverty, expanding education and combating the spread of [HIV/AIDS](#). The author of the report, Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, says most of the countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Ms. Fukuda-Parr says in addition to the AIDS virus, declines in primary school enrollment and increases in child mortality rates will negatively affect a country's development ranking. The report ranks Norway highest on the human development index, followed by Iceland and Sweden. The lowest human development rates are found in Burkina Faso, Niger and Sierra Leone. Among leading countries listed in the document, Russia ranks 63rd and China 104th. [View Article](#)

WHO: SARS Outbreaks Contained

05 July – CNN reported the World Health Organization has declared the [SARS](#) virus outbreak contained around the world after removing Taiwan, the last region on its list of affected areas. The island, which had seen soaring numbers of infections in May, has not reported a single new case during the past 20 days -- the benchmark figure by which an outbreak can be judged contained. Announcing that the global outbreak had been contained, WHO Director General Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland warned countries around the world not to let down their guard against the virus, saying they must remain vigilant against the disease that has claimed 812 lives. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Africa: Diarrhea, Cholera and Dysentery Update

30 June – ProMed reported on [cholera](#) outbreaks in the following African countries: As of 15 Jun 2003, the Ministry of Public Health in Mozambique has reported a total of 11,796 cases and 87 deaths of cholera (case fatality rate 0.74 percent). Cholera has been reported in Maputo province, Gaza province and Sofala province. WHO is assisting the national health authorities in Sofala and Gaza provinces to control the cholera outbreaks. In addition, the peak of the outbreak in Maputo province occurred at the same time as a cholera outbreak began in Mpumalanga province, South Africa. During the same period, cholera cases were also reported in Northern Hohho, Swaziland which borders on Mpumalanga province, South Africa. WHO is therefore proposing cross-border initiatives to control these cholera outbreaks. As of 8 Jun 2003, the Ministry of Health, Democratic Republic of

the Congo has reported a total of 13,452 cases of cholera including 380 deaths (case fatality rate, 2.82 percent) in the country. The most affected provinces are Sud Kivu, Katanga and Kasai Oriental. There is also a high risk of spread to the neighboring province, Kasai Occidental. In Uganda, a cholera epidemic is continuing in 3 districts. Bundibugyo reported the highest number cases, followed by Kasese and Kabarole. In addition, [dysentery](#) cases occurred in 98 percent (55/56) of the districts. Cholera has also been reported in the countries of Benin and Somalia. Finally, more than 500 cases of [diarrhea](#), mostly affecting under-5-year-olds, were reported in Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe and it was attributed to contaminated water. Five people have died. Officials at the provincial medical directorate in Chinhoyi yesterday confirmed the town's water had tested unfit for human consumption. [View Report](#)

Cholera in Liberia

04 July – ProMed reported between 6-29 Jun 2003, 586 cases of [cholera](#) have been reported from those health facilities still operational in Monrovia. As of 23-29 June, 50 percent of the admissions were from Bushrod Island and central Monrovia. Because of the security situation, exact numbers of cases and deaths are difficult to obtain. WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health with control measures, including mass chlorination in and around Monrovia. WHO is also providing drugs, medical supplies and chlorine to those nongovernmental organizations, including MERLIN and Medecins sans Frontieres (France and Belgium), working in Monrovia. [View Report](#)

DR Congo: Displaced in Bunia Face Aid Shortages

04 July – Relief Web reported Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) has set up a new health post where people enter Bunia and provides first aid as well as medical screening of people entering the town. According to MSF workers at the health post, the returnees are exhausted, many are ill and many children are malnourished because of the harsh conditions they have had to survive. MSF warned there are not enough essential supplies to help the displaced people coming to the town of Bunia in the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Since last Saturday, thousands of people have been returning to the town where an intervention force led by the European Union has deployed since Jun 6. Although many of the people coming to Bunia are returnees who fled fighting in the town in mid-May, only few families go straight back to their homes. Many of the houses in Bunia have been destroyed and looted. Insecurity still reigns in many areas of the town. [View Article](#)

Germany: Dengue Fever Cases Increasing Among Returning Tourists

07 July – ProMed reported the number of [dengue fever](#) cases in Germany is dramatically rising as more people go on holiday to places where the infection is endemic. The Robert Koch Institute in Berlin reported this week that cases of the viral infection rose to 230 in 2002, up from 60 the year before. The Robert Koch Institute warned that there could be a large number of unregistered cases in Germany, as many people who develop a short fever after returning home from holiday might not be tested for dengue. The areas that researchers named as sources of European infections include the holiday regions of Southeast Asia and the western Pacific. It is estimated that 42 percent of German cases are among people who had been to Southeast Asia, primarily Thailand. [View Report](#)

Russia (Dagestan): Buinaksk Quarantined after Outbreak of Hepatitis A

30 June – ProMed reported emergency officials have quarantined a city in the southern Russian region of Dagestan after an outbreak of [hepatitis A](#) at a kindergarten infected dozens of children. Forty-two children from a kindergarten in Buinaksk and one adult have been hospitalized since 16 Jun 2003 and confirmed to have hepatitis A infections. Contaminated water has been confirmed as the

source of the outbreak, and preventive measures are being taken along with the quarantine. [View Report](#)

Sleeping Sickness: Angola

04 July – AllAfrica.com reported at least 6,270 cases of [sleeping sickness](#) were recorded in the first half of this year in the district of Cacusó, 70 kilometers west of the Malanje city. The information was released on Friday in Malanje by the head of the local department of the Institute for Fight and Control of Sleeping Sickness, Adriano Caetano. According to Caetano, health authorities are already setting traps to capture tsetse flies in more affected areas. [View Article](#)

Thousands of UK Kids Need Re-vaccination with MMR

08 July – Reuters reported Britain's Department of Health said on Tuesday that thousands of children might be at risk of [measles](#), [mumps](#) and [rubella](#) because two private clinics had not followed correct immunization procedures. In an urgent message to all family doctors, the department said all children who received the three vaccines separately at the clinics should be re-immunized with the combined measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) jab. The present estimate is that this could involve up to 40,000 immunizations going back over 10 years. The two clinics involved in this case, at Elstree Aerodrome in Hertfordshire and Hillsborough Arena in Sheffield had closed, as they were not registered with the National Care Standards Commission. [View Article](#)

UK: Hunt Launched for Toxic Vodka

01 July – ProMed reported vodka laced with poisonous [methanol](#) may be on sale in shops in Suffolk. Trading Standards officers are on the hunt for bottles branded S Petersburg and St. Petersburg; any found will be withdrawn from sale. Bottles have already been found in the Waltham Forest area of East London containing dangerously high levels of methanol, which can lead to abdominal pain, breathing problems, and even coma if swallowed. The bottles have the following markings: S Petersburg Vodka - A white front label with: S Petersburg in black lettering and Vodka in red lettering 70cl,e, 37.5 percent Vol. Gold crown with cross swords and 2 red lions at the top, and a gold image of buildings at the bottom. A white back label with: S Petersburg in black lettering and Vodka in red 'Produced and bottled by cod. ACCISA GE A0002A - NE (GE)' '70cl,e, 37.5 percent and the bar code 8003151000006.' The bottles found so far also bear the lot code L601-02. St. Petersburg Vodka bottles have been found in 1-litre bottles and have identical labeling except for being 1LTR volume instead of 70cl, and have a different spelling on the label. Anyone who thinks they may have bought a bottle matching either of these descriptions should contact the Trading Standards Advice Line on 01473 584358. The symptoms can be delayed for several hours, so anyone who thinks they have drunk any of this contaminated vodka is advised to see their doctor as a priority. [View FSA Alert](#) [View Report](#)

WHO Prods Donors as Liberia Faces Health Crisis

04 July – Reuters reported tens of thousands of Liberians face a health crisis unless international donors provide urgently needed funds and basic supplies to the war-torn nation, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned. Contaminated water and a broken health system have sparked a rise in [cholera](#), other [diarrheal diseases](#), [measles](#) and [malaria](#) around the capital Monrovia where more than 97,000 internally displaced people are living in makeshift camps. Although fighting in the Liberian capital has currently subsided, tens of thousands of men, women and children displaced by the recent fighting are still living in desperate conditions in rudimentary shelters with minimum access to health care. The country has suffered its worst bloodshed since 1990 after weeks of fighting between

government forces and rebels demanding the resignation of Liberian President Charles Taylor. [View Article](#)

WHO Tests Home Based TB Treatment

04 July – AllAfrica.com reported as tuberculosis cases soar, in light of the AIDS pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is studying a new approach - the home based [TB](#) control system to treat the disease. Under this system, patients do not have to walk long distances to health centers for treatment. Health workers give drugs to a volunteer in the community, who delivers the drugs twice a week to the patient at home and ensures that they are taken. The system is being studied in six Sub-Saharan countries, including Uganda. If approved, the approach would be adopted internationally. At a Kampala consultative meeting at the WHO offices, yesterday, Prof. Francis Omaswa, the Director General of Health Services at the Ministry of Health said he hoped the success recorded in Kiboga would prompt global changes in the TB treatment. [View Article](#)

USCENTCOM

Cholera in Iraq - Update 3

30 June - From 28 Apr to 4 Jun 2003, a total of 73 laboratory-confirmed [cholera](#) cases have been reported in Iraq: 68 in Basra governorate, 4 in Missan governorate, and 1 in Muthana governorate. No deaths have been reported. From 17 May to 4 Jun 2003, the daily surveillance system of diarrheal disease cases in the 4 main hospitals of Basra reported a total of 1549 cases of acute watery diarrhea. Among these cases, 25.6 percent occurred in patients aged 5 years and above. The water supply situation is critical. UNICEF and local authorities have undertaken short-term measures to improve accessibility to safe drinking water and to limit the spread of water-borne epidemics. WHO is supporting local authorities in implementing an early warning communicable disease surveillance system, in strengthening laboratory capacity, and in coordinating the cholera outbreak response. The surveillance system is being expanded to the whole Lower South (all 4 governorates), and weekly reports from all facilities have begun. UNICEF is also supporting the initiative by providing health education material in Arabic and chlorine tablets to all health directorates. [View Report](#)

Kazakhstan: Radioactive Levels in Semipalatinsk Remain Problematic

01 July – IRIN News reported levels of [radioactivity](#) in northeastern Kazakhstan's former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing area remain a source of concern, IRIN learned. One of three sites across the former Soviet Union where hundreds of nuclear tests occurred until 1990, its legacy continues to this day. Attributing the downturn to both human and climatic factors, it was noted that the radioactivity was moving as a result of dust flows and steppe fires in the region. According to a scientist, the situation was exacerbated by various illegal human activities, specifically the gathering of scrap metals, much of it radioactive, in the vicinity of the testing area. Most of the [radionuclides](#) lie only 15 to 20 cm below the ground surface and, once on the surface, can be easily dispersed through wind and dust. And while the testing facility has been long closed down, the need to guard and secure the problematic area had not been met, she asserted. [View Article](#)

Pakistan: Polluted Water Claims Lives in Karachi

30 June – ProMed reported as many as 1700 people in Muslimabad, Landhi Town have been suffering from [gastroenteritis](#) after consuming water contaminated with sewage. Others claimed that more than 2000 were affected. At least 9 children and a woman lost their lives after consuming the

contaminated water in Landhi Town. Most of the victims resided in Bharamdas B Wali Gali and adjacent streets of Union Council Muslimabad, Landhi Town. Patients are being treated at a number of hospitals. An official of the water and sanitation department said investigations into the problem were underway. It is not yet known what organism or organisms are causing the infection. [View Report](#)

USNORTHCOM

Equine Encephalitis Stirs Worry in Health Officials

04 July – CNN reported health officials on alert for the return of [West Nile virus](#) are concerned about the re-emergence of another mosquito-borne disease in the Southeast: [eastern equine encephalitis](#). A Georgia man died June 21 in the nation's first human case of the disease this year. Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina have seen the highest number of horse cases of eastern equine encephalitis in years. The disease, which has existed in the United States for decades, kills nearly all unvaccinated horses. Although it rarely affects people, it can be more deadly than West Nile. Since 1964, there have been only 153 confirmed human cases of the disease. [View Article](#)

First Test for West Nile Virus is Cleared

09 July – Reuters reported the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it has approved the first test for doctors to give to patients they suspect have [West Nile virus](#). The test, made by Australian medical diagnostics company Panbio Ltd., can find antibodies to the virus in people who have severe symptoms such as meningitis or encephalitis. In the past, doctors who suspected their patients had West Nile could take blood samples and send them to the CDC for analysis. Now, any accredited laboratory can buy the diagnostic kit and significantly streamline the important process of analysis and reporting. This swift turnaround has benefits too for the authorities monitoring cases across the U.S. and Canada. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said having the test available might help control the virus, although there are no hopes of eradicating it. [View Report](#)

Forecasting Air Quality over the United States

02 July – The EPA reported increased awareness of national [air quality](#) issues on the part of the media and the general public have recently led to more demand for short-term (1-2 day) air quality forecasts for use in assessing potential health impacts and potential mitigation actions in local communities (e.g., increased use of carpools and mass transit, decreased industrial operations). This site discusses the EPA and NOAA roles in this goal and includes a link to the Forecasting Air Quality over the United States poster presented at the EPA 2003 Science Forum. [View Article](#)

Frozen Steaks Recalled in *E. coli* Outbreak Investigation

01 July – ProMed reported Stampede Meat, Inc., Chicago, is recalling about 739,000 pounds of frozen beef products because of a possible link to 5 [Escherichia coli O157:H7](#) infections in Minnesota, Kansas, and Michigan, the US Department of Agriculture announced. The products being recalled were produced between 17 and 22 Mar 2003 and bear the establishment code "EST. 19113" inside the USDA mark of inspection. The products, mostly vacuum-packaged steaks, were distributed to restaurants, institutions, and retail stores nationwide and also sold to consumers door-to-door, the FSIS said. The products implicated in the Minnesota investigation include bacon-wrapped fillets with a production date of 3-19-03 on the label, the MDH said. Smith said it is not known how widely the products were distributed. Consumers with questions about the Stampede Meats recall may contact

Bill Asleson, company executive manager, at 800-353-0933, the FSIS said. [View FSIS News Release](#). [View CDC Report](#). [View Report](#)

Number of Typhus Cases is up from Last Year

02 July – ProMed reported [Murine typhus](#) cases in Hawaii in 2003 have risen to 9 statewide, one above the number for the same period of 2002. Typhus cases rose in 2002 to the highest levels since 1947, which was the highest non-war outbreak, according to state health officials. Still, they said the numbers in 2003 are too small, and it is too early to determine whether there is a trend that will top 2002's total of 47. So far this year, murine typhus cases amount to 6 on Maui - 1 in Paia, 1 in Lahaina and 4 in Kihei - 1 on Molokai in Kaunakakai, and 2 on Oahu - 1 in Waianae and 1 in Ewa Beach. State vector control workers have been employing various strategies to control the rodent population. [View Report](#)

Mississippi: First Case of St. Louis Encephalitis Since 1994 Confirmed

30 June – ProMed reported the Mississippi State Health Department said on Fri 27 Jun 2003 that a Hinds County resident has [St. Louis encephalitis](#), a viral disease similar to West Nile fever. It is also the first case of mosquito-borne virus confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control in the United States this year, health officials said. Mississippi last reported a case of St. Louis encephalitis in 1994. No vaccine is available for the disease. [View Report](#)

Test Uncovers First West Nile-infected Blood Donation

04 July – CNN reported testing the nation's blood supply for [West Nile virus](#) began just days ago and already has uncovered the first infected donation -- in Texas -- letting health workers stop the blood from reaching any patients, the Food and Drug Administration said. The donor was a 46-year-old woman in Harris County, Texas, who was allowed to give blood because she displayed no West Nile symptoms, the FDA said. While confirmatory testing is still under way, the discovery does signal "blood is much safer than last year," said Hira Nakhasi, FDA's chief of transfusion-spread diseases. West Nile virus is spread mostly by infected mosquitoes. But about 13 of last year's record 4,000 West Nile cases are believed to have been caused by a blood transfusion. [View Article](#)

USA: Spike Seen in Whooping Cough Cases

23 June – ProMed reported cases of [whooping cough](#) are on the rise in Pierce County, Washington quadrupling to an average of 12.3 a month in the past 8 months. The spike, health officials say, puts the county and the state on track to surpass last year's reported cases of whooping cough, also known as pertussis. Pierce County had 68 reported cases as of the end of May, the last month for which the health department has complete data. Last year, the county had 84 cases and the state 575. Other counties are reporting increases from recent years. That's prompting renewed efforts to shed light on the disease and vaccinate children who are particularly susceptible. Part of the problem, health officials say, is that parents are not having their children vaccinated for the disease. Albany County, New York also reports 19 cases of whooping cough. County health officials issued an alert about a pertussis outbreak Wed, Jun 18 after 19 cases of the contagious illness have been reported this year, many in recent weeks. [View Report](#)

West Nile Virus Activity

02 July – The CDC reported as of 02 July, [28 states](#) are reporting [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) activity in birds, horses, mosquitoes or humans. In 2002, there were nearly 4000 reported cases of WNV

human infection, with the virus reaching 44 states. [View Information](#) [View National and state maps including county-level data](#)

USPACOM

Australia (NSW): Ross River Virus Alert

28 June – ProMed reported a record outbreak of debilitating [Ross River virus](#) infection in holiday destinations in the New South Wales (NSW) Far North Coast has prompted a call for tourists to be warned that they may be endangering their health if they visit. Byron Shire deputy mayor Jan Barham, herself battling the mosquito-borne virus infection, said tourist operators and local government must tell visitors of the risks of holidaying in places such as Byron Bay and Tweed Heads. Her stand comes as health authorities reveal that cases of Ross River virus infection and [Barmah Forest virus](#) (a related virus) infection have reached alarming levels in the region. Northern Rivers Area Health Service has released figures showing 370 cases of the 2 viruses are being treated in the worst affected areas: Byron, Tweed and Lismore shires. [View Report](#)

Death Toll Rises as Bangladesh Braces for More Floods

07 July – Relief Web reported devastating floods and torrential Monsoon rains have left at least 100 people dead and an estimated one million homeless in Bangladesh, officials said, as the country braced itself for further torrents. Many have also been reported missing after the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries submerged hundreds of villages in the worst affected Rangpur region in the North. The national Flood Warning Centre in Dhaka said more flooding and landslides could be on the way. The official flood death toll climbed to 100 after eight more deaths were reported overnight. The government was gearing up for a massive rescue and relief effort as the number of homeless has climbed above one million. Many have also been stranded in inundated villages. [View Article](#)

Epidemic in Andhar Pradesh, India Causes Deaths among Children

06 June – ProMed reported with 2 more children succumbing at the Government Children's Niloufer Hospital on Thursday, the toll in the mysterious fever that had spread panic in 3 districts of Andhra Pradesh rose to 23. In the past ten days, 15 children in Karimnagar, 6 in Nizamabad, and 2 in Adilabad districts died with symptoms of fever, nausea, headache, and fits. Unable to identify the etiology, doctors of the Niloufer Hospital have asked the National Institute of Communicable Diseases at Delhi and National Institute of Virology at Pune to help identify the cause for the unknown fever. [View Report](#)

India (Kerala): Dengue Fever and an Undefined Fever spreading in Kerala

30 June – ProMed reported [dengue fever](#) and an undiagnosed viral fever are spreading in Kerala at an alarming rate, creating panic, claiming 104 lives in the last 6 months. Since the onset of the monsoon this month, 19 persons had lost their lives due to dengue fever and 321 confirmed cases had been reported. An undiagnosed viral fever too is prevailing in the city resulting in students and employees staying away from workplaces. Lakeside Hospital has seen 10 to 20 cases over the past 2 weeks. It starts with a snuffle and develops into a fever where temperatures are in the range of 103 to 104 degrees F for 2 to 3 days. The patient subsequently experiences extreme tiredness for a few days. Though fever cases had been reported from all over Kerala, the worst affected districts were Thiruvananthapuram, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Kannur and Idukki districts, he said. Sivarajan said a massive cleaning and awareness campaign had been launched all over the state,

since mosquitoes were the carriers of dengue fever virus. Panchayats would initiate vector and rodent control programs. [View Report](#)

India: Leptospirosis Outbreak in Kerala State

26 June – ProMed reported as of 22 June 2003, 616 persons have contracted [leptospirosis](#) (rat fever) in Kerala State. Though the official figures of death toll in the past one week are 53, unofficial records show that not less than 115 persons have succumbed to the illness. The crucial question is whether the existing system is enough to take up the task, especially when towns and villages have been turned into waste-dumping yards, posing serious health hazards. [View Report](#)

Japan: Outbreaks of Measles at Colleges and High Schools

07 July – ProMed reported there have been several [measles](#) outbreaks centering on 3 colleges and 14 high schools, according to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases. In June 2003, 60 freshmen at the medical school in Kagoshima University were infected with measles. All 1500 medical and dental students were tested for serum measles antibody, and negative students were isolated at home until they received vaccination. The school will begin administering the measles antibody test to all admitted students and will give vaccinations beginning next year. In Kanazawa Technology College, 70 students became infected with measles and 26 were hospitalized between 8 May and 30 Jun 2003. The college reported the outbreak to the regional Health Center when the number of cases exceeded 20. The college called upon every student and employee to be vaccinated, and 70 percent of them complied. This is the first time that the Infectious Disease Surveillance Center has collected information on an intra-school outbreak. High schools in Tokyo, Miyazaki, and Ishikawa have also experienced outbreaks. Vaccination law requires that measles vaccine be administered between the ages of 1.5 to 7.5 years, but only voluntarily. About 80 percent of children were vaccinated. [View Report](#)

South Korea: *E. coli* Bacteria Spreads

01 July – ProMed reported the outbreak of the fatal [E. coli](#) bacteria continues to spread across the nation as an increasing number of people are reporting similar symptoms. The NIH said a total of 19 people have been classified as carriers of the bacteria so far. They include 15 at the Kwangju facility and the parents and 14-month-old brother of an 8-year-old boy who died of the disease last week at a livestock farm in Yangpyong, Kyonggi Province. Officials are suspecting food contamination as the source of the outbreak. The NIH said that it is investigating the distributors of cafeteria food to the Kwangju center, and the schools, kindergartens, and academies in the region which the other suspected patients have been attending. [View Report](#)

Suspected Cutaneous Anthrax Cases in Bolpur, India

27 June – ProMed reported one person died and 2 persons have been admitted in Beliaghata Infectious Diseases Hospital among 25 other suspected cases of cutaneous [anthrax](#) in a tribal area of Sukhbajan village at Bolpur of Birbhum District, West Bengal, India. The disease started after intake of meat of a dead cow in the evening of 24 Jun 2003. They were suffering from vesicular swellings and ulcers of the skin along with swollen, draining lymph nodes. Experts from School of Tropical Medicine are investigating about this. All affected persons are rapidly improving after treatment and the condition is now well controlled. [View Report](#)

Thousands Flee China Floods

07 July – BBC News reported more than 200,000 people have been evacuated in eastern China because of heavy flooding in the region, local media has reported. At least five people have been killed and many thousands more are reported to be at risk from disease, an official from the disaster relief section of the Anhui Department of Civil Affairs told French news agency AFP. In Jiangsu province, about 900 kilometers (560 miles) south of the capital Beijing, the city of Nanjing was hit with about 195 millimeters of rain - the heaviest it has experienced in 72 years. The city's streets were flooded and many cars and buses broke down, forcing residents to wade through the water. Many thousands of evacuees are living in makeshift shelters in schools and factories. Relief efforts - including the distribution of tents, food and medical supplies - are underway. [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Columbia: 11 Deaths Due to Yellow Fever in Norte de Santander

07 July – ProMed reported on a [Yellow Fever](#) outbreak in rural Convencion 270 kilometers to the northwest of Cucuta. The total number of deaths may be higher if there is confirmation on the deaths of 60 people in the area of El Suspiro in Tibu. Information is from the Benito Ovalle Hospital in Convencion. According to the authorities there is a shortage of 15,000 doses of vaccine. The area involved is an area with ongoing political strife, which is also impacting on control measures. According to reports the population affected are farmers who have been displaced due to the political strife in the area. It is possible that the farmers were infected in the displaced zone and then returned to their areas of residence already infected. It is presumed that the disease came through the border with Venezuela. The medical coordinator of the hospital, Luis Carlos Moreno, has requested vaccines from the local Health Department and the National Ministry of Health, stating the need to vaccinate over 20,000 farmers in the area. [View Report](#)

USSOUTHCOM Dengue Update

07 July – ProMed reported the Guatemalan government put the country on alert for [dengue fever](#) on Sat 28 Jun 2003 after 2 people died and the disease affected 171 others during the rainy season. The Guatemalan Health Ministry decided to intensify epidemiological security measures and called on people to take preventive actions, said the reports. The ecological association NATURPAZ reported that there have been outbreaks of diseases such as leptospirosis, dengue hemorrhagic fever, mycotic stomatitis, pneumonia, and diarrhea in the Cuban capital of Havana. The municipalities most affected by dengue fever are Habana Vieja [Old Havana] and Habana Centro [Central Havana], while leptospirosis has been reported in the municipalities of Arroyo Naranjo and San Miguel del Padron. Stomatitis has been detected in La Lisa and Marianao, and cases of pneumonia and diarrheal diseases have been detected in most of the municipalities of the capital. [View Report](#)

Typhoid in Haiti - Update

30 June – ProMed reported as of 30 May 2003, 200 cases of [typhoid](#) and 40 deaths have been reported by the WHO Regional Office for the Americas (PAHO) and the Ministry of Health, Haiti. 3 cases have been laboratory-confirmed. The outbreak started in Apr 2003 during the dry season and affected remote villages in the Grand Bois Area, bordering the Dominican Republic. These villages lack access to health care facilities and to safe water; all water points in the area showed a maximum level of *E. coli* pollution. Most of the deaths occurred in persons who had no access to health care facilities. In May 2003, PAHO and the Ministry of Health sent a team to investigate and control the

epidemic, including: sampling water points, establishing mobile clinics, laboratory testing of cases, providing health education, and organizing the response at the local level. [View Report](#)

Volcanic Eruption Takes Toll on Ecuador Health, Economy

05 July – The Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported some 16,000 people have been adversely affected by the ongoing eruption of Tungurahua volcano in Ecuador's central Andean region, Health Minister Francisco Andino has said. The 5,000 meter volcano, 135 kilometers south of Quito, one of Ecuador's most active, has been in a state of eruption since October 1999, but entered a new phase of high activity on June 5, geophysicists said. Andino said the health ministry would send health care workers, medicine, masks, and other supplies to the region, where some 38 communities -- some of them very remote -- have been affected. Volcanic ash "is making a big impact not only on health, but also in the economy," Andino said, pointing to a loss of crops and domestic animals. [View Article](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hioupdate/>.

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